

CSP - Talking Points

Nationally

In FY 2005, the Conservation Security Program will touch...

- ◆ every State and the Caribbean Area,
- ◆ 202 watersheds (8-digit hydrologic unit code),
- ◆ nearly 800 conservation districts, and
- ◆ more than 800 counties, parishes, and municipalities,... which are home to over 80 million people.

Colorado

In FY 2005, the Conservation Security Program will touch...

- ◆ 10 watersheds (8-digit hydrologic unit code),
- ◆ Nearly 28 Conservation Districts, and
- ◆ More than 30 counties, parishes, and municipalities

Nationally

Combined, these watersheds make up an area slightly smaller than the State of Texas (165 million acres, while Texas is about 172 million acres).

Colorado

Combine, these watersheds make up approximately 3.6 million acres.

Nationally

About 208,000 farms and ranches are within these watershed boundaries and they cover a little more than 83 million acres, an area nearly equal in size to the combined area of Missouri and Florida.

Colorado

About 2,916 farms and ranches are within these watershed boundaries.

Nationally

Fourteen of these watersheds include more than 5 percent Tribal lands, accounting for about 2 million acres.

Colorado

Too minimal to determine

Nationally

About 52 percent of the farmland is cropland and 48 percent is grazing land.

Colorado

About 25 percent of the farmland is cropland and 75 percent is grazing land.

The Watershed Approach

Overall, these farms and ranches help us meet our goal of offering CSP to participants in all of our watersheds with working agricultural lands over the next 8 years.

Watersheds are nature's boundaries

Watersheds are nature's boundaries. They are a common sense way to group together producers' success on resource issues. Everyone lives in a watershed, and using the

rotation approach, within the next eight years, every farmer and rancher will have an opportunity to participate in the program.

More funding means more watersheds—or all watersheds

Using a watershed approach provides greater flexibility within the program as Congress makes funds available to allow additional watersheds and farmers—to be added to the CSP sign up.

For Employees Only:

Better use of our time—means more conservation for farms and farmers, more credibility for us

For NRCS employees, focusing on one-eighth of the watersheds at a time, means much less time spent on unsuccessful applications and many fewer unhappy interactions with landowners who are not yet ready for the program. In short, it's a more efficient use of our time and protects our public credibility as service-oriented conservationists.

Q. Why is NRCS implementing CSP on a watershed basis verses a nationwide basis?

A. A staged, watershed-based implementation of CSP makes sense – economically, practically and administratively.

Q. Will producers in every watershed have an opportunity to participate?

A. Yes. Because everyone lives in a watershed, and because each year producers in approximately one-eighth of the nation's 2119 watersheds will be eligible for the signup, everyone will have the opportunity to participate over the eight-year period.

Q. Why not use county or state lines as the delineation for the signup area?

A. Watersheds are nature's boundaries. They are also a common sense way to group together producers working on similar environmental issues. Using a watershed approach will also help ensure that CSP's finite resources are focused first on the most achievable environmental performance areas.

Q. What if my watershed is not selected this year?

A. Signups for participation in the program will be rotated between watersheds on an annual basis. Each year (after the initial signup) producers in approximately one-eighth of the nation's watersheds will be eligible for the signup. Producers who are not in a selected watershed can use that time to assess the resources on their farms and ranches and begin preparing for participation in the program when their watershed is rotated into the signup. To help them do so, producers can select from a portfolio of USDA, state and local conservation programs to make the necessary natural resource improvements on their operations.

Q. Will more money be available in future years?

A. Over the next seven years the administration is committing \$13.4 billion in funding for the Conservation Security Program. Ultimately, Congress will determine the funding available for each future fiscal year. The watershed approach allows NRCS all the flexibility needed to expand the program as Congress makes more funds available.